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THE MADRAS REVIEW

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COMMENTS

With reference to our criticism of the Madras Publicity Bureau, in our last issue, a correspondent informs us that the Editor of the *Hindu* is a member of the Publicity Board and therefore, must be taken to support the views contained in the publications issued in the name of the Board. We do not know if the Editor of the *Hindu* has taken exception to these publications privately but, in the absence of a public contradiction from him, we must say that our correspondent is correct in his inference.

* * *

After all, over 52 per cent. of the voters polled in Madras. As we write, the actual percentage for the whole Presidency is not yet available but we may take it that the voting in this Presidency will reach a comparatively higher percentage than in other Provinces. Although the Non-Co-operators worked very hard, the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin controversy is responsible for driving—we say driving advisedly—so many voters to the polling booths. It was not because that many people loved Non-Co-operation less but because they loved party and communal feeling more that we see such a high percentage of voting. Well, the elections are over. The difficulty, in the immediate future, will be to find funds for paying the salaries of Ministers. It is a pity that the law is not so framed as to compel those who actually voted to exclusively bear such expenses. Those that sat in the Councils of 1909 and onwards have achieved the millennium. Now, our friends, the new Councillors hope to create a new heaven and a new earth for us.

* * *

We are glad to hear that the visit of Mr. Gandhi to the Hindu University has not been successful. We have always criticised very strongly this aspect of the Non-Co-operation movement. We repeat that if Mr. Gandhi had not taken up this work and had only concentrated on the Boycott of Councils, not only would he have been more successful but he would have carried a larger number of his friends and followers with him. The question that must be considered in politics is immediate utility. We are absolutely unconvinced of the utility of withdrawing children from schools in achieving the object which Mr. Gandhi has in mind. We are firmly of opinion that, as Lala Lajpat Rai said, national Government must precede national education. That is why we have supported Mr. Gandhi's movement in all the directions in which it aims to work for a national Government. It is a controversial matter but still we feel strongly that in the interest of the success of the Non-Co-operation movement, which we have no doubt at heart, this aspect of the propaganda must be given up.

* * *

Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayengar delivered a most eloquent lecture on "Future of the Universities" from which we give the following extract taken from *New India*. We shall comment on it in our next issue :—

"The type of education that should be devised must be one which would call forth the latent faculties which lay dormant in them. The system must be such as would in the shortest space of time make them fit to take a place in the front nations of the world. That ought to be the work of the psychologist first and the practical politician next. The absence of a scientific habit of mind had been made a reproach to them. That was an unjust reproach. They were not more superstitious than other people in the world, but what they lacked was the ability to observe, to collate, to act upon conclusions they drew and to apply knowledge which they had labouriously obtained to practical ends. Applied science was absolutely absent. The passion for applied science was the thing to which all education is ought to enthuse most. Without that there could be

no industrial development of the country. Without industrial development they would not have economic efficiency, and without economic efficiency they would never get anything like a reasonable measure of political independence. University professors ought to be full time devotees of scientific learning, and he was not in favour of further emphasis on the literary side. If they wanted anything like scientific culture they wanted not English professors of science merely. The best men in England did not and would not come to India. What was required was the establishment of a number of chairs for Indian scholars who could be made to communicate communicable knowledge to students. Mistakes would be made and blunders would be committed, but an experiment had to be made. There should be an organisation of a scientific bureau attached to the University and staffed by a band of enthusiastic students. It was unnecessary that those students should have gone to England. They might go to England afterwards. Those who had gone to England might differ from him, and he was more biassed in favour of his own country. Indian scholars would have to apply knowledge in an Indian way and not in a European way. If Indians were going to be really practical people, students should make up their minds not to take philosophy. Let them abolish the Chair of Philosophy from this University. An Indian was a philosopher by birth and temperament. He was an icnoclast and spoke conventionally to students as an Indian to Indians though he had the misfortune to speak in a foreign tongue. There were able mathematicians, and the late Ramanujam was supposed to have been a second Newton. But what they wanted was not pure Mathematics. This country stood in need of a band of astronomers. He was not crying down the merits of Indians, but he was entitled to say that the output of Indian astronomers had not been adequate. Botany should receive greater attention. Geology and Metallurgy received very little attention now. The most supreme need of the country was Chemistry, and a Commercial Chemistry was of vital importance to them. There should be more than one University for the Presidency, whether on a linguistic or any other basis."

COLONEL WEDGWOOD ON NON-CO-OPERATION.

Col. Wedgwood has published his first considered pronouncement on Non-Co-operation. The Colonel regrets that the Non-Co-operation movement will delay Home Rule and prevent the training in Self-Government made possible by the Reforms Act. No Congressman in any part of India will accept this view because at the Congress of 1906 Dadabai Naoroji declared that Indians were fit for Swaraj. Every leader in India and almost every session of the Congress after 1916 has repeated this statement. What India wants is Self-Government itself, not any training in that art. The Colonel says that Non-Co-operation with the Government is one thing but to teach hatred of those who differ in race, or even in opinion is different matter. We are not aware of any responsible Indians who teach race hatred. If such there be, they are certainly wrong. But the passions and enthusiasms shown by our young men at public meetings should not be mistaken for any organised attempt to teach race hatred. Young men always possess these qualities and they will not be young men if they do not possess them. Col. Wedgwood then quotes a letter which he wrote to Mr. Chamberlain the Secretary of State in 1917 with a view to convince us as to his capacity to foresee things. We are convinced, although, his idea of giving India Home Rule in 50 years' time takes our breath away. The good Colonel does not take the people into his confidence as to whether he still sticks up to this time-limit. If he does so, we shall then not take him seriously.

"Non-Co-operation as now practised" says the Colonel "seems to me to involve coercing, bullying and hating all those Indians who retain their posts or their practice etc." This is a baseless charge which, we hope, will be strongly repudiated by the leaders of the Non-Co-operation movement. If the Colonel had given some specific instances to warrant his conclusion, it would have been better. But he has not escaped the temptation to exaggerate the mistakes, if few such be, for the purpose of discrediting the whole movement. So much for the diagnosis.

Coming to the remedy, the Colonel suggests two things *viz.*, a time-limit for Home Rule and Army on one side and Co-operation on the other. For this purpose a Conference must be held over which H. R. H. the Prince of Wales must preside. The Government as well as the Indian National Congress must consider these proposals and whoever refuses, must, according to the Colonel, be consigned to perdition. We shall examine these proposals a little.

The Non-Co-operation movement has been started as a protest against the Government for breaking its pledges. The Colonel wants another pledge regarding the time-limit. Col. Wedgwood had been staying with the Viceroy and with some Governors in India. We may reasonably assume that he has discussed his scheme with them already and that he would not have published it had he not been certain of a sympathetic response from the Government. But still, it is not enough to say vaguely that a pledge must be given as to the time-limit. Mr. Gandhi promises Swaraj in one year if people follow the line of action recommended by him. What period of time will satisfy India? This is a controversial matter and the hitch between the Government and the people will arise here. If Col. Wedgwood still cherishes the belief which he held in 1917 with regard to the time-limit, we might wish him a speedy voyage home. For our part, we will agree if the time limit is placed between 7 to 10 years. But even this may look a long period in the eyes of our younger leaders who, by their own efforts, propose to win Swaraj before that time. The Government has never denied that its policy is to give India Home Rule. But when? There lies the whole thing and the Colonel would have done better if he had suggested the time-limit himself for the purpose of discussion. The same remarks apply with regard to the Army.

Assuming that these two things will satisfy India—we refuse to believe they will—is it necessary to gather an imposing Conference? What is there in these two wonderful things which the Government cannot do of its own accord?

Even if Indians attended such a Conference, how can they pledge themselves for eternal co-operation with the Government? The Colonel must know that India asks her liberty as a brith-right and consequently, she will yield to no conditions until she wins it.

It is perhaps possible that if the Government does the two things in a satisfactory way, the present temper of the nation may cool down. Let the Government attempt to do them instead of calling a Conference. We do not think that the Indian National Congress will accept the conditions imposed by the Colonel and offer Co-operation with the Government. We are not frightened by the Colonel's threat that the Labour Party in England will wash its hands clean of Indian politics if the Congress refuses to accept the Colonel's view. India has long ago passed the stage of receiving external inspiration and help. In fact, the Non-Co-operation movement is essentially based on self-help and self-sacrifice. As we have often pointed out in these columns, it is more in the interest of England that Britishers must be anxious to appease the Indian sentiment. India will take care of herself and it is well that all Britishers bear this in mind before talking patronisingly of Indian aspirations.

We wrote, sometime back, protesting against attributing motives to Col. Wedgwood because he condemned Non-Co-operation. We feel that the Colonel is sincere in his desire to see better relations established between Britain and India. But we are sorry that his proposals do not give us any hope of success.

WHY FOREIGN GOODS MUST BE BOYCOTTED—AND THAT NOW.

By. Mr. M. Subraya Kamath.

The Non-Co-operation leaders have curiously enough neglected to urge before the public the adoption of what seems to many thoughtful people the most effective item in the programme laid down by the Special Congress. The attention of the country is now concentrated on only two of the items, *viz.*, the boycott of Councils and the boycott of Schools. While the importance of this propaganda cannot be denied, one wonders whether it would not have been more effective from all stand points to have paid equal attention, if not more, to the question of boycott of foreign goods.

The items now selected for active propaganda are certainly the most contentious of the whole programme, and to that extent, the concentration of attention on them to the neglect of others is tactically unfortunate. For to have striven equally hard for the boycott of foreign goods would have enlisted the active sympathy of a far larger section of the people for the Non-Co-operation cause and that by itself would have been an immense gain. Secondly, the struggle would then have been far keener. Neither Anglo-India or the diehard Press in England could have afforded to ridicule the Non-Co-operators. The propaganda would then have touched their pockets and it need hardly be emphasised that the pockets form the most sensitive part of our opponents. Thus the struggle would have immediately gathered greater momentum.

Of course it is never too late to begin that movement; and all that we desire to emphasise is that the earlier we begin the better for this country. Boycott of foreign goods can never by itself be a disadvantage to India and as matters stand, this seems to be the psycologically the right moment to begin it. In the first place, the whole world including the countries that have so far been ruthlessly exploiting Indian resources are passing through a severe economic and industrial crisis. Naturally a ban on their products at this moment will tell heavily on them. At first they will curse the Indian agitator and when those curses prove ineffective, they will naturally ask whether their own proconsuls here are not responsible for their ruin. It won't take them much time to realise that their ruin is to be traced directly to that breed of Dyers and O'Dwyers whom they had, by their callous indifference, permitted to develop in this ultra-hospitable land.

Moreover the boycott of foreign goods will effectively cure the exchange blithe which the inefficient or stupid bureaucracy has brought on India. The reader is probably aware that the violent change in the exchange at this moment is due to the excess of imports over exports. The boycott propaganda will naturally check the imports and to that extent the trade current will be set right. There will then be no more scope for the Government to indulge in such ruinous freaks as the sale of Reverse Councils.

This brings us to the third strange argument for the boycott programme. The policy underlying the sale of Reverse Councils is so collossal a misfortune that few people have taken the pains to find out in what all ways it has reacted prejudicially on our national progress. Apart from other injuries, it has been almost deadly in effect to the recent boom to Company flotation and to that extent to the development of industries. By that policy the Government withdrew from this country a large amount of money for the advantage of foreigners and foreign lands, and thus added to the financial stringency in India. The Boycott of foreign goods will counteract that harm, though not fully, by extending some sort of protection to our new undertakings-protecting them specially from the machinations of foreign exploiters who are just at present out to dump a large quantity of their manufactures on this helpless land.

These are briefly the reasons why economically as well as politically, this is the right moment to begin the boycott of foreign goods. But let us not forget that as India is at present constituted, the boycott of foregin goods is always a beneficial programme. To understand this one has closely to study the trade figures. For, after all, what does our foregin trade mean? Nothing more or less than parting with goods essential for our National progress and importing articles of quite the contrary nature.

Let us go a bit deeper into this analysis:—The only useful article of food we import is sugar and the only other import of which India can be said to be in need is machinery and both of these do not exceed five per cent of the total weight of the rest. That is made up of liquors, tobacco, cotton-cloth, soaps, drugs, etc.—all of which can be made in India and the bulk of which India would be happy to avoid. Perhaps it will not be quite relevent here and yet it will not be without interest to the Indian reader to know the trend of even these imports.

	Value in lakhs of Rs.		
	Pre war Average	War Average	1918—19
[illegible]	202	236	337
Drugs	213	[illegible]	[illegible]
Tobacco	71	132	214
machinery	580	576	586
Sugar	1317	1470	1561

Note also that prices have risen during the same period by at least fifty per cent. and it will be seen that we are gradually importing less of the more useful articles and more of the worthless or harmful ones !

And if we turn to the exports, the picture will be seen to be even more melancholy. We export rice, wheat, oil seeds and other articles of utility which form the vast bulk. Whatever the scarcity here, we have to part with our rice and wheat, and that simply because we are helpless to prevent their being snatched away.

The saddest part of this story is yet to be told. We send out our precious articles of food and sustenance. In return we get liquors, tobaccos and others and even then we do not get the full value for the articles sent out. The balance is retained by the India Office and usually lent out to influential London financiers or now the British Government at miserably low rates of interest, and when the accumulations are phenomenally large, a portion of it is wiped off—that is the effect from the National stand point,—and a remnant brought to India by such devices as the sale of Reverse Councils. For don't you know that for the past few years the Secretary of State went on accumulating Indian money at Rs. 15 per pound and recently returned it to India at about half that rate? And why Indian money should be but at nominal rates in England while here the Government itself borrows at a higher rate even a moderate like Gokhale was never able to comprehend.

Among the readers of this article there are probably some who have pitied the ignorance of those savages of Africa who parted with gold dust in return for glass beads—of course ignorant of the fact that he and his countrymen will be held in even lower esteem by the future economist. They obtained glass beads even for gold dust which they had in plenty and which they could not make use of. We are parting with articles more precious—the very food from the insufficiency of which we are acutely suffering and what the return? Not the innocent glass bead alone but also liquor and tobacco. And even there, the Negro took as much as he thought he was entitled but we don't get even what we know we have to get. Whose plight then, dear reader, is more pitiable?

HEART-THROBS.

In star-lit nights heart-throbs I hear
Of the one life that glows in all,
From out the ashes bursting clear
That always strive it to enthrall.
Heart-throbs that, bursting narrow bounds,
Seek for a voice to shape for ever
Their wingid flight in clear sounds.
So them I from my heart sever.

DAY-BREAK.

Awake! Far in the eastern sky
The sun has sprung from ocean's womb.
At sight of him the shadows fly,
And earth puts on her morning bloom.
Awake! for mango groves resound
With song of birds and children's play,
As if life's secret they have found
In careless mirth and light of day.

K. G. SANKARA, B. A., B. L.

"FROM A MUSIC PARTY."

By Mr. E. S. Sunda, B. A.

Siren airs and Orphean notes rarely entice me. If I were an Ulysses, I would dance to the tunes of Circe! I am not a warrior and the sudden emotions which overpower him do not move me. I sit cool and *criticise*. Honest attempts to understand music always leave me in despair. Ears non-co-operate and the softer musical instinct in me—I hope there is—is on its decline. 'Treatments' of all sorts from the Coimbatore Thayi of *Mathada Parathenu* to the *dapa, pada* of Alagianambhi have not bettered my position. Costly 'visits' of Poochi Iyengar did not improve me. I would better like be a spider than be a songster if it means such physical stylish turns and bends of Mr. Iyengar! Vythi only accelerated my impression of the art! I am not the man for awful contortions.—I hate them as I cannot imitate them! I do hope that there is still some musical response in me to a few melodies—I pray I shall not have the unpleasant necessity of writing the obituary notice to it while I am breathing!

In family circles and socials, I suffer horribly from this incapacity 'to lose my head' over a musical performance. People call me prosaic though I have more of poetry and romance in me; they dub me 'Puritan' when I am prepared to laugh at every trifle, including even the whimsicalities of their musical experiments! Probably as an antidote to my seriousness, a considerate friend 'dipped' me into a music party one day. To see a good assembly is always happy; to see one sitting apparently statue-like, in obedience to the voice from the dais, is more pleasant—leave aside its pathos! Friends in the hall recognised me as I entered and probably thinking to give me a *fair trial* showed me the front seat! First rows in gubernotorial parties and public civil functions ought to be envied. Hands can shake and be shaked. We can complacently smile and be formally smiled at. Odd wordy jokes may temper our uneasiness and a 'return-home' with our souls safe is possible! But a front seat in a music party is an infliction. Bhagavathars and other musicians always consider 'the men in the front'—of course to their unhappiness—to be the intellectuals of the locality. To preserve the decorum becoming the front, one bias to wink and wink with self-possession that he knows more than entertainer. A serious and critical face is necessary sometimes but it should be agreeably disturbed with a long broadening of the forehead and shrinking of the brows—obviously in appreciation of the '*ragams*'. Our lips too should move and sometimes quickly with the inner patting of the tongue. They should resolve to blurt out occasionally '*Besh*! *Ah*! *Oh*!.' The heads

of the aristocrats in the front generally do not roll. Some maintain their equilibrium perfectly innocent of the technique, some fear the 'tumble' of their turbans, some with their head dress desire to impress the musicians with their dignity—that is at least some consolation when *they are not impressed* with any music!

In obedience to the wishes of my exacting friends, I took the front seat, and the chief of the music party noted me. Our eyes met and continued meeting for a long time. I wish I had the courage then to have whispered to the songster 'I cannot appreciate music, much less you.' But that would have been undiplomatic and disgracing the whole race of the intellectuals who go or are sent to the front! A companion akin to my genius had the privilege of tutoring me voluntarily in the 'ragams'; but to his discomfiture and my consolation he overdid the task of appreciation! A gentlemanly admonition emanated from him to the singer that he should leave off little ragams to reserve time for '*Kappi*' This elicited a mild reply in the true 'oriental' fashion "your order, sir, as you please, what I am engaged in is only *Kappi*." My friend was not to be baffled. As though he did not care for the first part of the *Kappi ragam* he quickly retorted 'move on fastly to the second.' How the entertainer felt this artificial appreciation of his display is known only to himself! Another instance of my friend's musical turn was extended to me when he vociferously complimented the bhagavathar on his Canarese songs while all the other members of the audience were very mildly following the Telugu note! Ignorance is bliss; coupled with audacity it is one foot nearer divinity.

My colleagues in the mid-hall were really more sincere in their work! Gentries whose thoughts constantly turned on the cost of the passport for the vocal feat gave good exercise to their necks. Heads rolled like balls from left to right, front to back why all round. Hands readily co-operated and the thighs had the worst of the co-operation. Operations of this kind were a real hindrance to some who audibly appreciated with their harmonious snore. Extremes do meet in the music hall. The most violent appreciator is sure to meet the apparently silent listener whose feelings test the music in 'sitting-sleep.' Their meetings are sometimes announced by a sudden magnetic attraction between the heads—which unmusical people usually call 'knocks.' Some in the audience were really imaginative, more imaginative than imagination would require! They appreciated very highly, particularly the very thing for which the songster felt greatly ashamed. Ironics of music worked in various ways. Many encouraged him when he was on the wrong track, but discouraged him when on the right. Expectations (Singer's) of '*Besh*' were never fulfilled. Singer was defied by the audience but when he least expected complements, he was overpowered into '*Sabesh*', '*Accha,*' '*Maha Kair.*'

I should state before I close how I saved myself or how I was providentially saved from the galley of the front seat! A gentleman dressed in black with a walking stick which would do credit to the esteemed residents of the highway entered the hall *in state* and took the seat in front of me. The piercing eyes of the songster were directed against him and when one of the intellectuals began the first item in the 'mutual admiration' programme by introducing the 'arrival' as the great 'Mahajan' of the locality, I thought I was safe and my heart began its normal beatings! Had the gentleman spared the stick, and the social etiquette allowed, I would have *substantially* appreciated the songster with a parting advice to go to the nearest best hospital and packed off. That was not to be. Our new friend was the man for the seat. Beginning with '*balle*' to a tune, he ended with saying 'sabash' to the plate of *pansupari* placed in front of him! Juice was occasionally streaming from the corners of his money box lips and any little attempt on his part to speak was sure to create a tragic scenery of 'red' colour. He could be very well requisitioned to be Casca in one of our amateur theatres and without much ado he could create the bloody scene of *Julius Caesar*.

It was 8-15 P. M. when this demigod of this Music Pantheon slyly mumbled 'the gun is gone already.' *Mangalam* was sung. As I slipped out, he caught me and protested that I should attend the next performance. Thank God! I had previous notice! I saved my soul, myself and my time in a neighbouring village that day much to the disappointment of my musical friends! Surely in the villages there were no songsters and much less gentlemen of the stick—qualification to frighten me!

COL. WEDGWOOD'S VIEWS.

Well enough do I understand the Non-Co-operators. If I were an Indian, indignation might easily overwhelm both judgment and principles. If I had seen my people murdered and the murderer receiving £20,000 and the blessing of a foreign House of Lords, I might easily run amok regardless of all consequences or justice. I understand it and I sympathise with men like Pundit Moti Lal Nehru who, for an ideal, step down from affluence to comparative poverty, stir blood and rouse the admiration of all mankind. Though you may satisfy your passions by preaching hatred, no good can come from such preaching. Hatred destroys soul. Mahatma Gandhi himself does not preach hatred of anything, but of injustice. But most of the others do so preach, defiling the cause. The Mahatma has made it clear that if there is violence not sanctioned by him, he will withdraw to the Himalayas, but he knows well enough that violence is only the eruption on the skin and hate is the disease that kills. Apart from victims, I would say that open violence is less damning than hatred bottled up by fear of consequences.

Again, Non-Co-operation as now practised seems to me to involve coercing, bullying and hating all those Indians who retain their posts or their practice or their seats on the Councils, all those who continue to co-operate for base or honourable motives. My life has been spent in trying to prevent coercion and bullying. No argument of temporary expediency can persuade me that it is right for the King or the priest or the state or the majority to control opinion and make men cowards. The Mahatma knows I am right. He will never coerce. He will try to prevent it. But will he be able to stop his allies?

But, it would be unfair as well as futile to expect Indian patriots to stop building up this mountain of hatred and

bitterness unless the British Government stop building from their side too. There must be change of heart. I see no way of bringing about this change of heart among the bureaucracy and Europeans except by making it perfectly plain that at certain definite date Indians will be masters in their own house and obtain Colonial Home Rule. If the Non-Co-operators really believe that the bureaucracy was preparing for and working for Home Rule, if they could get and believe in the firm promise of Home Rule by certain date, if they could see the formation of a national territorial army to be the weapon of the Indian Government of the future, and then indeed peace might come in our time. So far as Hindu non-co-operators are concerned we should get, in the new legislature, co-operation and preparation for efficient rule. Would Moselms not also get what they want? Thanks to the Greek election, something may even now be done to restore Thrace and Smyrna to extend Ottoman sovereignty over Arabia. But the reconstruction of Mussalman respect and the reconstruction of free Mussalman lands depends not so much on altering treaties which do not alter the power as recreating power. The eight million of Indian Moslems must be the basis of that power.

The Way Out.

At present Non-Co-operators do not believe that any British Government will give Home Rule. They think the I. C. S. could and would postpone the date of change for ever. I cannot (though I know many I. C. S. men who are honest workers for the Indian democracy) blame them for this want of faith. Someone even higher than Government must now speak if the Indian is to have faith and if the bureaucracy is to have the men believe in the new spirit. I think I have judged aright the Indians whom I know and trust. If the British people really mean Home Rule, it is wicked to allow the hate campaign to continue. The solution must seem obvious to all good men. A Conference must be held and a compact entered into. The conditions of the Conference must be as described above a time limit and army on the one side and co-operation on the other. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to all Englishmen, calls for a Conference. Lala Lajpat Rai, in his open letter to Sir Edward Maclagan, puts forward the time limit and an Indian Army as the basis of reconciliation. Will not the Congress move even to take the first step? The Congress has called for the impeachment of the Viceroy. Under the circumstances His Excellency would probably not even wish to preside. But what could be a finer work for H. R. H. The Prince of Wales? What could more nobly raise the curtain on his public life and career? What better pledge could there be to India? What better advocate for change of heart that must take place among his own people? If the Nagpur Congress refuses to consider and accept this suggestion, if they, as some say they are sure to reject the blood-stained hand of perjured England, then, no more can be done except to wait and hope for this madness to end. British Labour with all good will in the world will have failed and anarchy or tyranny will come upon India.

If, on the other hand, as I still think they will under Mahatma's guidance, the Congress accepts, then, the British Government must accept or refuse. No camouflage will avail. Pledge and army together seal the compact.

If they don't accept, not only will India be united as were Italians in 1861, Moderates and Extremists, but British Labour and, I believe, British liberalism too will know their duty and back them in the right.

REVIEWS.

Songs of the Sea (Sagar—Sangit). By C. R. Das and Aurobindo Ghose. Published By Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras, Price Re. 1.

That abode of infinite mystery, the sea, has been the theme of poets in all ages and all climes but it is a theme whose possibilities can never be exhausted by any single poet. Most of us know all about Mr. C. R. Das as a keen politician, "the boss of the Delhi Congress" as he has been called in some quarters, but few of us are aware that he is also one of the best living poets in the most highly developed and modernised of all Indian languages, namely, Bengali. To one who peruses his English translation of his Bengali "Songs of the sea" (Sagar-Sangit) the thought is bound to come that Mr. C. R. Das, like the late lamented Mr. Tilak, has missed his true vocations in life and blundered into politics whereas he ought to have dedicated his talents to the undivided service of the Muses. Who can calculate the extent of the loss of creative art sustained by this country in this fashion? Mr. Das' prose poems in English have all the elegance, delicacy and distinction which we associate with Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's. Of course the former lack the almost perfect rythm and melody of the latter but our author may yet acquire them by practice, for it is as true to-day as when Bacon said it that "practice makes perfection" in literature as well as in everything else. Lest the young reader with literary poeticial ambitions should at once take it into his head that poetry is entirely a matter of practice and prepare to mount the dangerous Pegasus of prose—poetry without further ado I may here remind him of the other saying that poets are born, not made." "Digging poetry," to borrow the expressive phrase of the immortal Mark Twain, is an exhilarating mental exercise and it harms no one—except the digger. Especially the tendency to write prose poems which has become so fashionable because it is so facile ought to be put a stop to generally speaking in the interests of poetry as well as in those of the would—be poets. The empty redundancies of some of the latter-day efforts of such acknowledged masters as Whitman and Tagore ought to be an eloquent warning to them. The poem under review itself is full of vague repetitions. Redundancy, according to occidental critics, is a peculiarity of the oriental mind. At any rate this is true of the Bengali mind. Bengali poetry and Bengali art are obsessed by one sovereign idea—the mystic idea. It is a great idea but still it is not a perfect idea. As a matter of fact there is no perfect idea expressing absolute, universal truth. That is why in our greatest poets, in Valmiki and Kamban, Homer, and Virgil, Dante and Caldeon, Shakespeare and Goethe, Racine and Victor Hugo (to cite only a few mighty names) the mystic idea or the infinite is always subordinated to the individual idea or to what is called human interest. Hence the great and eternal power

exercised over our minds, and hearts by these supreme masters of utterance. Even the poets of the second rank in the West such as Shelly, Byron, Keats, Stephen, Phillips, Hardy, Masefield, Francis, Thompson, Whitman, Materlinck, and Jean Arthur Rimband combine the two ideas referred to above in a greater measure than Indians poets of the same degree. This will become self-evident if I pit Whitman against Tagore. The former is no less "mystic" than the latter. But the human thoughts, hopes, fears and aspirations of to-day, all the mighty upheavals and surgings of the new democracy have found a better exponent in the one rather than in the other. Not in a spirit of cavil or of carping criticism do I say this but in my anxiety that modern Indian art should not continue to develop in a one-sided or lop-sided way. Let our present-day artists also learn to combine intuition with imagination and lofty spiritualism with healthy materialism.

As it is Mr. C. R. Das has only one string to his poetical lyre. He has rung a number of variations on one only note—the well-known and pretty well worn—out note of yearning for union with the Infinite Soul represented in the case by "the soul of the sea" a longing which, I daresay, most of us have experienced in the presence of "the fathomless deep," sitting of an evening on our own magnificent Madras beach.

Mr. Arabindo Ghose' renderings of Mr. Das' Bengali prose poems into Engligh verse are, needless to say, in keeping with his reputation as a poet.

S. M. MICHAEL.

ATHISAYA BOKKISHAM.

By Mr. S. T. Murti Mudaliar.

Krishna's Electric Printing Works—Rangoon. Price Rs. 1-8.

Mr. Murti Mudaliar is a well-known tamil author whose previous works have given the Tamil-reading public much interest and profit. The plot in this book—Wonderful Treasure—is entertaining and human and the language of the author is chaste. We heartily recommend this work to the notice of our readers.

* * *

We have received the first number of *The Business Review*, a monthly magazine devoted to the discussion of all topics of practical interest. The number contains several useful selections on agricultural and industrial matters. The Journal is published by Messrs. Chari & co., Post Box 281, Madras.

* *

Jeevamirtha Sanjeevi.—We have received a packet of the above tonic from Sri Gouri Ayurveda Vaidya Mandiram, 363, Pycrofts Road, Royapettah. This is a good specific for disorders in the nervous system and to enrich the impoverished blood. It is nicely prepared and cleanly packed. 20 doses cost Rs. 2/- We heartily recommend a trial to our readers.

To

The Editor of the Madras Review.

NON-CO-OPERATION.

Sir,

It is true that there is something rotten in the state of India. It is also true that there is a rotten notion prevalent among people, that when things go wrong, they need a practical man. with a practical scheme. In accordance with it, our politically minded men and women declare that India at present requires a practical man to set things right and not an idealist. This is almost a sickening idea to my humble self. This is something like calling the false hair of an actress her natural hair. Saner men will see the truth, that when things go wrong we need an unpractical man, with an unpractical scheme.

We can call a move, a practical one only after it has served its purpose. There can never be such a thing as joining the victorious side in a battle. The victorious side can be decided only after the fight is over. Mir Jaffer was no fool and he did not join Clive as promised, till he was sure that success was with Clive and it would be as foolish as putting the cart before the horse, to say that one, to be practical, should join the winning side even before the fight is over. Yet the politicians, very practical politicians, of Shastriar's type who would have chickens only for the practical purpose of laying eggs and not have that they might live, as Chesterson observes, "to amuse themselves, to pray God or to suggest ideas to French Dramatists" would speak of practical this and practical that.

If a bombs-dropping air machine goes bad, an air craft boy or two will be able to mend it. If it goes very bad those boys can end it and not mend it. You have to drag an old professor from a laboratory for the mending of it. That is to say that even for the mending of a man-killing machine you need a dreamer. And still more will be the need for many visionaries for the mending of a country where things have gone very wrong, is evident. So our politically oppressed, economically exploited country wants seers in abundance to fancy our country's needs and propound schemes—not practical please. No scheme as I have more than once pointed out can be said to be a practical scheme, until it yields fruit.

Mr. Gandhi's Non-Co-operation movement should be worked out even by those who oppose it, if they think Mr. Gandhi an unpractical man and his scheme an unpractical airy something.

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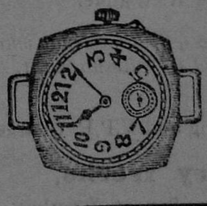

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